2

George Asakura

Drowning Love

Drowning Love

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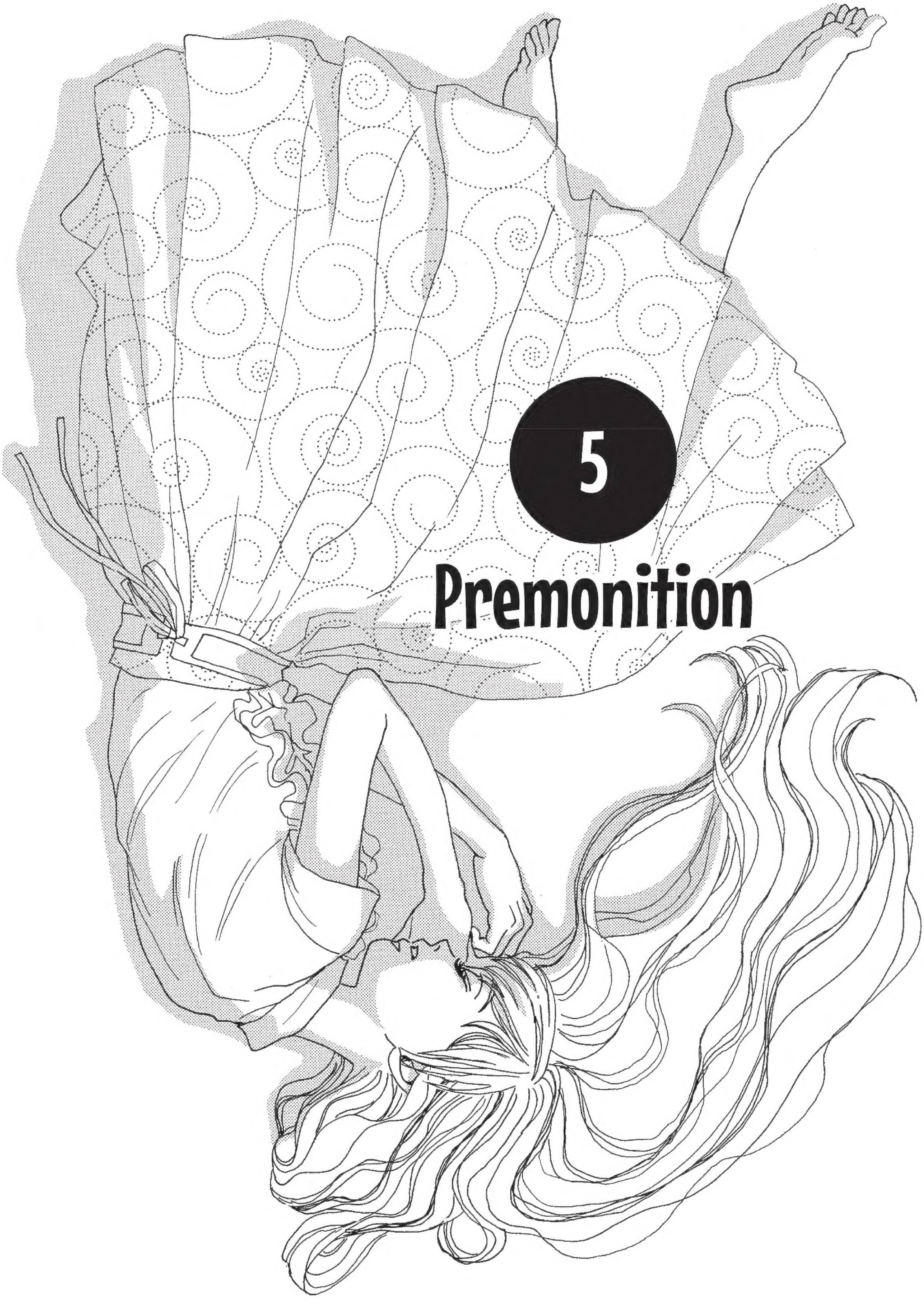
THE STORY SO FAR...

DESPONDENT OVER HER NEW COUNTRYSIDE LIFE, THE YOUNG FASHION MODEL NATSUME, AGE 12, AND AN INTRIGUING CLASSMATE, KOU, DECIDE TO RUN AWAY. NATSUME BEGINS TO REALIZE HER FEELINGS TOWARDS KOU MAY RUN DEEPER THAN SHE THOUGHT. SOON AFTER, NATSUME UNEXPECTEDLY RECEIVES AN INVITATION FROM A FAMOUS PHOTOGRAPHER TO DO A NUDE PHOTO SHOOT! WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT IN NATSUME'S PURSUIT OF KOU?

Drowning Love



5

Premonition

THE DISTANT RUSTLE OF UNEASINESS ...
THE FIRES OF THE FESTIVAL STILL SMOLDER IN MY HEART.
はぁ HUFF HUFF
はぁ HUFF HUFF
はぁ HUFF HUFF
はぁ HUFF HUFF
はぁ HUFF HUFF

はー
HUFF HUFF
はぁ
HUFF HUFF
"WHAT'S THE HARM..."
"...IN ASKIN' THE GODS TO WATCH OVER YA?"
はー
HUFF HUFF

CLAP
ぱんっ
CLAP
ぱんっ
I-
I'M THINKING OF LETTING THE PHOTOGRAPHER HIRONO DO A SHOOT WITH ME!
AND IF IT SEEMS LIKE THE PICTURES WILL BE BETTER NUDE, I'LL DO THEM NUDE!
BUT ONLY IF!
HIRONO TAKES GREAT PICTURES EVEN IF THEY AREN'T NUDES!
I'M-
I'M GOING TO SAY THAT AT THE MEETING!
AND... IF IT SEEMS LIKE HE JUST WANTS A YOUNG GIRL AND THAT ANYONE WOULD DO, I'LL REFUSE.
IF...

IF IT SEEMS LIKE I DON'T HAVE A SAY,
I'LL REFUSE.
BUT...
I HAVE A FEELING THINGS WILL GO WELL.
STILL, I'M UNEASY.
ビタン
CLATTER
キーンコーン
DING DONG
MOCHIZUKI
カーン
DANG
コーン
DONG

YOU'RE LATE.
YOU, TOO.
ちゃら
CLACK
I SAW YOU...
...AT THE FESTIVAL YESTERDAY.
...YEAH.
I HEARD Y'ALL CAUGHT OTOMO.

YEP.
AND BECAUSE OF THAT, I THOUGHT I'D LOOK FOR YOU, TOO.
AND I FOUND YOU.
HOW CAN YOU BE SURE? THINGS WERE PRETTY CRAZY.
I'M SURE.
IT'S FRUSTRATING.

6年生
I'VE NEVER BEEN SO JEALOUS OF SOMEONE BEFORE.
EVER.
...
OKAY.

IF YOU DECIDE YOU'RE A BOY BY NEXT YEAR, WE'LL TALK ABOUT LETTING YOU IN.
I NEVER SAID I WANTED TO PARTICIPATE.
HASEGAWA!
DASH
ダッ
ガッ
GRAB
CAN YOU BELIEVE IT?!
THE *KANNUSHI* CHEWED ME OUT OVER THE FESTIVAL THING!
HOW DOES A *KANNUSHI* THINK HE CAN JUST WALTZ INTO OUR SCHOOL AND TELL US HOW TO RUN THINGS?!
STRETCH
YOU DAMN BRAT!
...

WHO YOU CALLIN' DAMNED?! THE FESTIVAL'D TAKE ANY BOY 13 AND UP SINCE FOREVER!
IT'S ONLY RECENTLY Y'ALL DECIDED IT WAS TOO DANGEROUS AND MOVED THE AGE UP TO 18! GOT NOTHIN' TO DO WITH THE GODS!
AND BY THE WAY, I'M COMPLETELY UNINJURED! THAT PROVES I HAVE THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE!
MORE'N YOU **OLD PEOPLE** DO!
I'M JUST TALKIN' SENSE!
DON'T SPLIT HAIRS!
HUH.
SO IT WASN'T JUST A RANDOM EXCUSE FOR ROUGH-HOUSING?
MAYBE I MISJUDGED HIM...
STILL...

IT CERTAINLY LOOKED LIKE HE BELONGED THERE.
LET'S SEE... RIGHT NOW, MR. KAITO IS DOING SOME FREESTYLE JUDO TRAINING WITH HASEGAWA-KUN AND OTOMO-KUN.
LET'S GO AHEAD AND DECIDE GROUPS FOR YOUR CLASS TRIP.
By the way, I'm the principal.
WHOA!
わぁっ
PARTNER UP WITH WHOMEVER YOU LIKE, WITH BOYS AND GIRLS SEPARATED INTO GROUPS OF EIGHT OR NINE...
...WELL, I SUPPOSE WE'D BETTER SPLIT UP THE CLIQUES, SHOULDN'T WE?
IN THAT CASE, WHY DON'T WE ASSIGN MIXED GROUPS BY LOTTERY?
CHATTER
CHATTER
ガヤガヤ
ACK!
THAT MEANS THE PARTNER LOTTERY IS THE **VERY MOMENT** THAT DECIDES WHETHER OR NOT THE TRIP WILL BE FUN!
THAT'S TERRIBLE!
...

PLEASE STAY WITH US AGAIN!
ひねもす屋
HINEMOSU INN
ひねもす屋
ひねもす屋
WHEW...
WE'RE PAST THE WORST OF IT NOW.
MEIKO-SAN!
IT SEEMS YOU HAVEN'T MADE ANY UPDATES TO THE "BEAUTIFUL YOUNG MISTRESS DIARY" ON THE HINEMOSU INN HOMEPAGE RECENTLY.
I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE A NICE PROMO CAMPAIGN...
...BUT I SUPPOSE YOU DON'T WISH TO GO ALONG WITH MY IDEAS.
OH HO HO!
NOT AT ALL! I WAS JUST ABOUT TO UPDATE IT!
EH HE HE!
TYPE カチャ
TYPE カチャ
Like hell I will! I'm fed up with pretending to be a mistress! Aaaaaarghh!!! I just want to go back to Tokyo!
カチャ TYPE
YEAH, RIGHT!
TAP TAP カカッ
TAP TAP カカッ
BACKSPACE, BACKSPACE, BACKSPACE...
SIGH
...
ギ CREAK
...I WISH I COULD SWITCH PLACES WITH MY DAUGHTER.

BRRRING
BRRRING
...
CLACK
HM?
Doi-san
NATSUME'S MANAGER?
HELLO,
THIS IS NATSUME'S MOTHER.
IF THIS IS ABOUT MODELING, SHE'S-
EXCUSE ME?
A PHOTO-BOOK?
WHEN WE DID THE DRAWING ...
...AND YOU ENDED UP IN KOU-CHAN'S GROUP...
...IT JUST FELT LIKE, OF COURSE THAT WOULD HAPPEN!
HUH?
WHY?

IT'S FATE!
EVER SINCE YA MOVED HERE, I ALWAYS THOUGHT, "SHE'D GET ALONG GREAT WITH KOU-CHAN!"
A-AND WHEN Y'ALL ELOPED, I KNEW IT WAS TRUE!
WE DIDN'T ELOPE!
HEE HEE HEE.
SURE, SURE.
...
WAUGH...
IF OTHER PEOPLE THINK THAT ABOUT US...

I DON'T KNOW IF I SHOULD CALL IT "FATE"...
...BUT WHEN I DREW THE LOTTERY...
...I ALSO THOUGHT, "OF COURSE!"
AS IF IT WERE OBVIOUS THIS WOULD HAPPEN.
SUGITANI, SAKAI
HASEGAWA, OTOMO, YAMAGATA,
RUSTLE
OKAY!
I'M GOING TO TRUST MY HUNCH!
RUSTLE
YEAH!
I BET THE PHOTOBOOK WILL TURN OUT WELL, TOO!
I KNOW...

...EVEN I HAVE THE POWER TO GLOW LIKE KOU-CHAN DID.
...
...I'M UNEASY.
ピロリ～
BA-BI-BOOP
ピロリ～
BA-BI-BOOP
Call Doi Manager
AH!
HELLO? ...
CALM DOWN. IT'S OKAY.

THINGS WILL GO WELL.
Natsume-chan? I just got off the phone with your mother...
WHAT ?!
You're going on a class trip? Well, after that, we'd like you to pay us a visit, too, okay?
UH, REALLY ?
What's up? Something wrong?
ARE WE... ...GOING TO TALK ABOUT THE NUDE SHOOT?
Oh, no! Ha ha ha...
We'd never get away with it.
Publishing nudes of a 12-year-old is illegal.
WHAT ?!
THEN, WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT EARLIER ?!
Well... Hirono-san just said that without thinking!

SO-
WHAT A RELIEF! I WON'T HAVE TO POSE NUDE AFTER ALL!
Well...
We can't use them in the book, but if you wanted to take some shots for personal use...
It'd have to be a secret, though, okay?
Just a memento of the shoot.
NO!
ABSOLUTELY NOT! THAT'S EVEN WORSE!
Ah!
It's just an idea!
You don't have to!
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!
WELCOME HOME.
SHOGO HIRONO'S ORIGINS
AH...
But I hid them!
SHOGO HIRONO?

YOU'RE AMAZING, YOU KNOW.
BUT, BEFORE WE DECIDE ANYTHING, LET'S MEET HIM AND DISCUSS IT IN PERSON.
IN THE MEANTIME, LET'S KEEP IT A SECRET FROM YOUR FATHER.
I GUESS...
...I REALLY AM SOMETHING SPECIAL.
広能晶吾の原点
SHOGO HIRONO'S ORIGINS
THE WORLD OF SHOGO HIRONO

KYOTO'S GOURMET MAP!
京都DEグルメMAP
オススメ
RECOMMENDED SPOTS!
THAT LOOKS SO DELICIOUS!
OH, I GOTTA EAT HERE!
NO QUESTION!
YEAH, THAT LOOKS GOOD, TOO!
GUYS, WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO VISIT EVERY PLACE!
NATSUME-CHAN! HOW ABOUT HERE?
LEMME SEE...
がや CHATTER
"PLENTY OF CUTE ACCESSORIES!"
AW, NO WAY! YOU GIRLS GO ALONE!
THINGS TO DECIDE: 1) WHERE TO GO DURING FREE TIME 2) INDEPENDENT STUDY TOPIC
決める事 ①自由時間のコース ②自由研究のテー
がや CHATTER
がや CHATTER
NO WAY!
WE GOTTA TRAVEL AS A GROUP!
HEY, WHY DON'TCHA STICK DUMPLINGS IN YOUR HAIR?
OH! HOW FASHIONABLE!
ははは HA HA HA
AN' IF I GET HUNGRY, I CAN JUST EAT 'EM!
ARE YOU STUPID?!
キーンコーンカーンコー DING DONG DANG DONG
OH, NO!
WE AIN'T PLANNED ANYTHING YET!
IT'S 'CAUSE WE AIN'T EVEN BEEN TALKIN' ABOUT PLANS!

WAH HA HA HA HA!
きゃははは
YOU IDIOTS!
アホじゃー！
WHAT'RE Y'ALL STILL DOING HERE?!
GO HOME ALREADY!
AAH!
AH, MY BELLY HURTS!
WE AIN'T DECIDED EVERYTHIN' YET!
BECAUSE YOU'RE YAPPIN' 'BOUT USELESS STUFF! JUST DO IT ON YOUR LUNCH BREAK TOMORROW!
EH HE HE!
See ya!
WHAT A WONDERFUL GROUP!
BECAUSE OTOMO'S IN IT, RIGHT?
I'VE LIKED SAKAI FOR GOIN' ON SIX YEARS NOW, BUT THIS IS THE FIRST CHANCE WE'VE HAD TO REALLY CONNECT!
He's the only boy taller than I am!
YAMAGATA'S A PRETTY FUN GUY, TOO!
AND NATSUME-CHAN AND KOU-CHAN ARE ALREADY MARRIED...
NO, WE AREN'T!

LOOK, IT'S JUST A MISUNDERSTANDING!
IT'S NOT EVEN LIKE I LIKE HIM OR ANYTHING!
IT'S SHAPING UP TO BE A REALLY FUN TRIP!
AIN'T IT?
...
OH, WHATEVER.

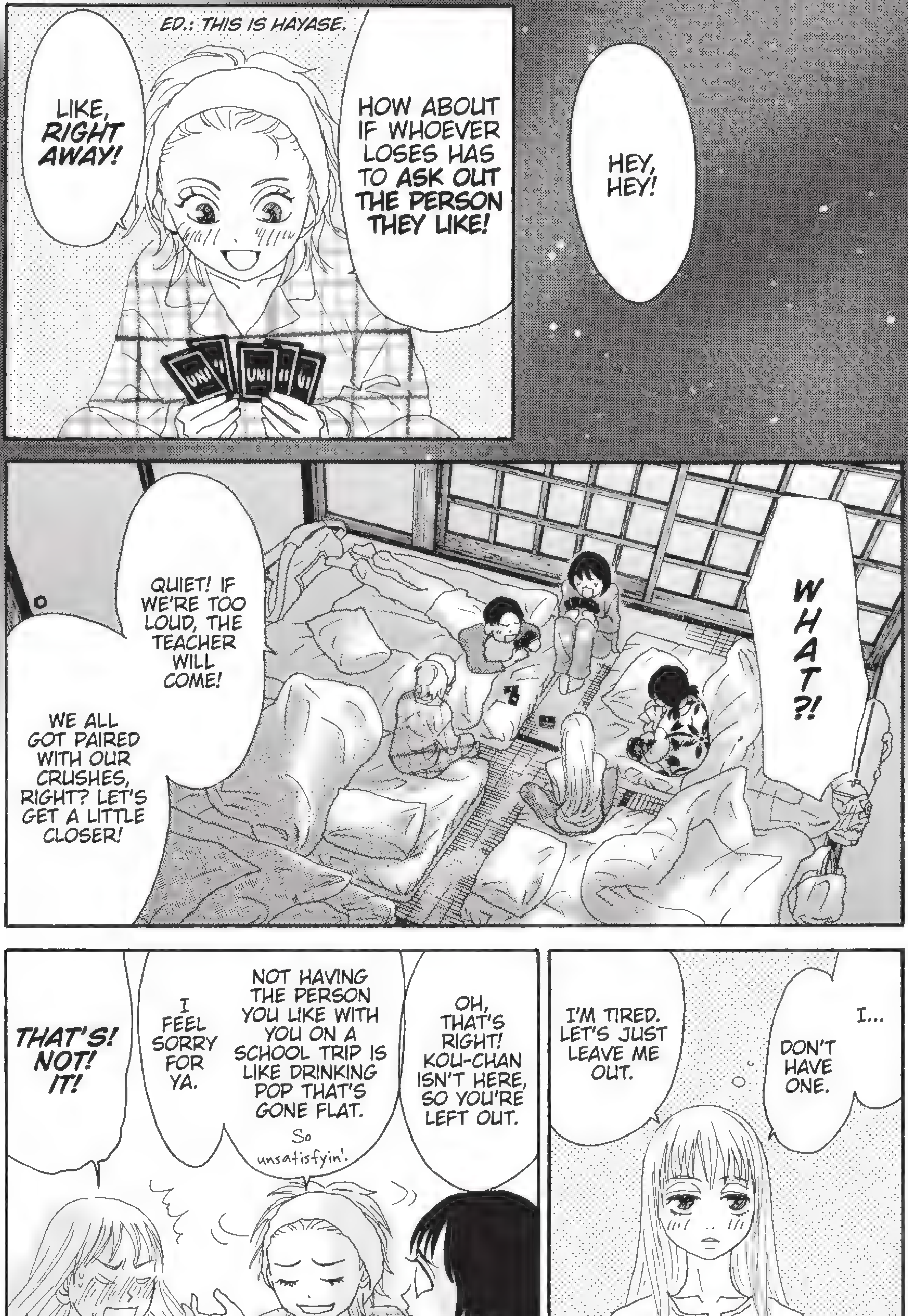
WHAT?!
WHADDAYA MEAN, KOU AIN'T COMIN'?!
UNI
His father said it's not safe for him.
CHATTER
CHATTER
I tried to convince him otherwise, too!
AWW... KOU-CHAN'S FAMILY IS AWFUL PROTECTIVE OF HIM.
Hasegawa's caused his share of trouble recently, too.
The phone call I got said, "This is his punishment. I won't let him go."
RAN AWAY WITH HIM
PARTICIPATED IN THE FESTIVAL WITH HIM

THIS IS ALL YOUR FAULT!
ME?! WHAT ABOUT YOU?
Quiet!
It's nobody's fault. Fighting over it won't let him come along.
...
KOU-CHAN'S FAMILY SURE IS WEIRD.

I HEARD HIS OLDER SISTERS WEREN'T ALLOWED TO GO ON TRIPS, EITHER.
I FIGURED KOU-CHAN WOULD BE OKAY 'CAUSE HE'S A BOY.
HE *IS* THEIR HEIR, THOUGH.
NO MATTER HOW MUCH THEY SPOIL HIM, HE'S STILL A HASEGAWA.
SO WHY DOES HIS UNCLE STILL GET TO KNOCK HIM AROUND?
CRACK
UGH!
ANYWAY...
THIS IS KOU-CHAN WE'RE TALKING ABOUT! HE'S HARDLY THE KIND OF PERSON TO DO AS HE'S TOLD!
I WOULDN'T BE SURPRISED IF HE SHOWED UP UNEXPECTEDLY.
What's with this deer?!

YES, THAT HAS TO BE IT!
It's gold!
HE'S GOT TO COME.
I'VE GOT A STRONG FEELING HE WILL.
MY HUNCHES ARE BOUND TO BE RIGHT.
GLANCE
GLANCE
...
NATSUME-CHAN?

ARE YA LOOKIN' FER SOMEBODY?
BOM-BA-YE'S IN THE NEXT SHOP OVER.
STUDENT MONITOR
NO... I'M OKAY.
HEY, GUYS!
WE GOTTA GO HOME TOMORROW,
SO LET'S BUY SOME GIFTS FOR KOU WHILE WE'RE HERE!
YEAH!
Somethin' like this!
誠
TRUTH
...
URGH...
IT'S SO BORING.
I GUESS KOU-CHAN IS JUST A BORING KID, TOO.
WHAT A DISAPPOINTMENT.


HEY, HEY!
HOW ABOUT IF WHOEVER LOSES HAS TO ASK OUT THE PERSON THEY LIKE!
LIKE, RIGHT AWAY!
ED.: THIS IS HAYASE.
WHAT?!
QUIET! IF WE'RE TOO LOUD, THE TEACHER WILL COME!
WE ALL GOT PAIRED WITH OUR CRUSHES, RIGHT? LET'S GET A LITTLE CLOSER!
I... DON'T HAVE ONE.
I'M TIRED. LET'S JUST LEAVE ME OUT.
OH, THAT'S RIGHT! KOU-CHAN ISN'T HERE, SO YOU'RE LEFT OUT.
NOT HAVING THE PERSON YOU LIKE WITH YOU ON A SCHOOL TRIP IS LIKE DRINKING POP THAT'S GONE FLAT.
So unsatisfyin'!
I FEEL SORRY FOR YA.
THAT'S! NOT! IT!

YOU'VE ALL GOT THE WRONG IDEA HERE!
I DON'T LIKE KOU-CHAN!
YA DON'T GOTTA BE SHY ABOUT IT! I SAW HOW YOU WERE ACTIN' ALL SAD IN THE GIFT SHOP TODAY!
YEAH!
THAT'S— I MEAN—
WHOA! SHE'S BRIGHT RED!
THAT'S LOVE, NATSUME!
HA HA
はは
HA HA
はは
YOU'RE USUALLY SO MATURE, BUT YOU'RE GETTIN' ALL WORKED UP OVER THIS!
AAH! I'M GOING TO SLEEP!
GOOD NIGHT!
OH! HEY! KANA-CHAN, YOU SHOULD DATE SUGITANI!
WHAT? ...
WELL, NATSUME-CHAN'S GOT A CLAIM ON KOU-CHAN, RIGHT?
AN' YOU'VE BEEN A GOOD SPORT NOT PITCHIN' A FIT OVER IT.

URGH... HAYASE...
HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO REACT TO THIS...?
I...
I MAY LIKE KOU-CHAN, BUT I ALSO LIKE NATSUME-CHAN.
I JUS' WANNA SUPPORT THEM...
HUH? WHAT KINDA DUMB CRAP YOU SPOUTIN' NOW?
YOU'RE THE DUMB ONE!
PEOPLE CAN LIKE WHOMEVER THEY LIKE!
YOU GOT SOMEBODY, HAYASE, AND YOU, TOO, MAKIHARA! AND NATSUME-CHAN...
...SHE LIKES KOU-CHAN ENOUGH THAT THEY EVEN ELOPED!
AIN'T IT WEIRDER TO CHANGE YER FEELIN'S ON A WHIM?
SNIFF
AW, COME ON. DON'T CRY!
IT'S BETTER IF YOU AIN'T SHOULDERIN' THAT BURDEN!
You've gotta be mature about this!
LOOK, SUGITANI'S NICE! JUS' FALL FOR HIM AN'-

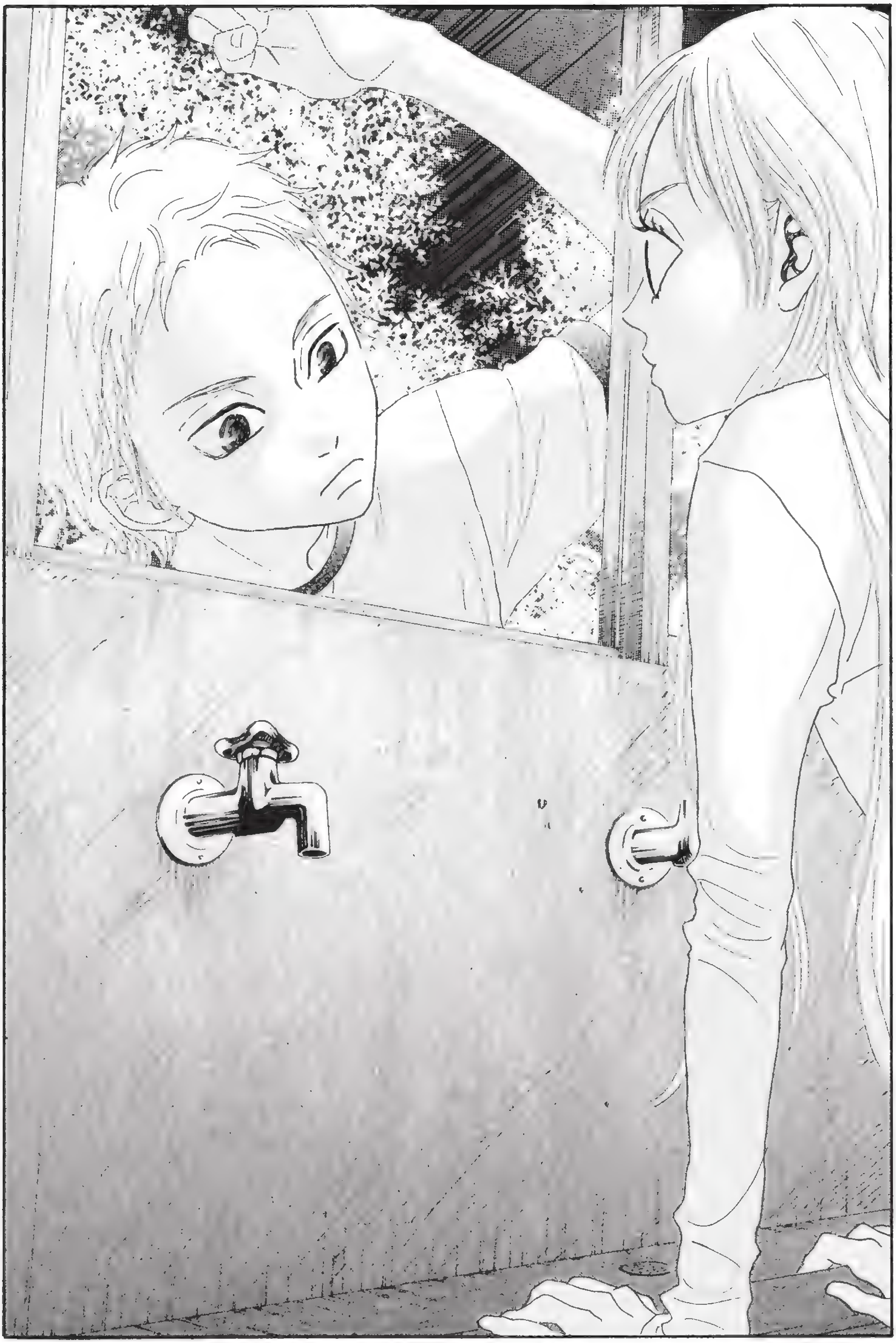
KOU-CHAN AND I...
...ARE RIVALS! OKAY?!
FLUMP
かばっ
YOU REALLY DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT ME, OKAY?!
WHERE ARE YOU–
THE RESTROOM!
...
バタン
SLAM
LOOK! YOU SAID ALL THEM THINGS...
...AND NOW...

AH! I'VE HAD IT!
YOU CAN'T JUST GO AROUND TELLING PEOPLE HOW THEY FEEL!
FLIP
ぺった
ぺった
FLAP
"ACTIN' ALL SAD IN THE GIFT SHOP"...
FLIP
ぺた
THAT WASN'T IT!
I WAS JUST KINDA DISAPPOINTED MY HUNCH DIDN'T COME TRUE.
ぺった
FLAP
IT WASN'T BECAUSE KOU-CHAN ISN'T HERE.
FLAP
ぺた
...

THAT'S ALL! THAT'S ALL IT WAS.
AFTER ALL, ALL HE DID WAS...
...BURN THAT SHINING LIGHT OF HIS INTO MY EYELIDS.

SO THAT WHENEVER I THINK OF HIM, MY BODY SHAKES.
"I WANT IT, TOO!"
I WANT TO SHOW OFF WHAT I CAN DO!
I WON'T...
"I WANT IT, TOO!" RESOUNDS WITHIN ME.
...I WON'T IDLY FALL FOR SOMEONE LIKE HIM.
ROAR

WHEN I GO HOME ...
...I'LL DO THE PHOTO-BOOK.
JUST YOU WATCH. I'LL IMPRESS YOU YET!
YEAH.
THE REAL CONTEST BEGINS WHEN I GET HOME.
CLATTER
ガタッ



BANG
HEY, OPEN UP!
...
SHUMP
AAH! IT'S SO COLD IN KYOTO!
WHY DID I WEAR A T-SHIRT?!
IS E'ERYBODY ASLEEP ALREADY?
WHY?

WHY DID YOU SHOW UP NOW, OF ALL TIMES?!
YOU IDIOT!
YOU'RE LATE, DUMMY!
Trail of Dead

WHY'RE YOU CRYIN'?
I AIN'T GOT ANY RICE BALLS THIS TIME.
I'M NOT HUNGRY!
...I GET IT.
YOU WERE ALL LONELY WITHOUT ME AROUND.
WELL, THEN. SORRY I'M LATE.

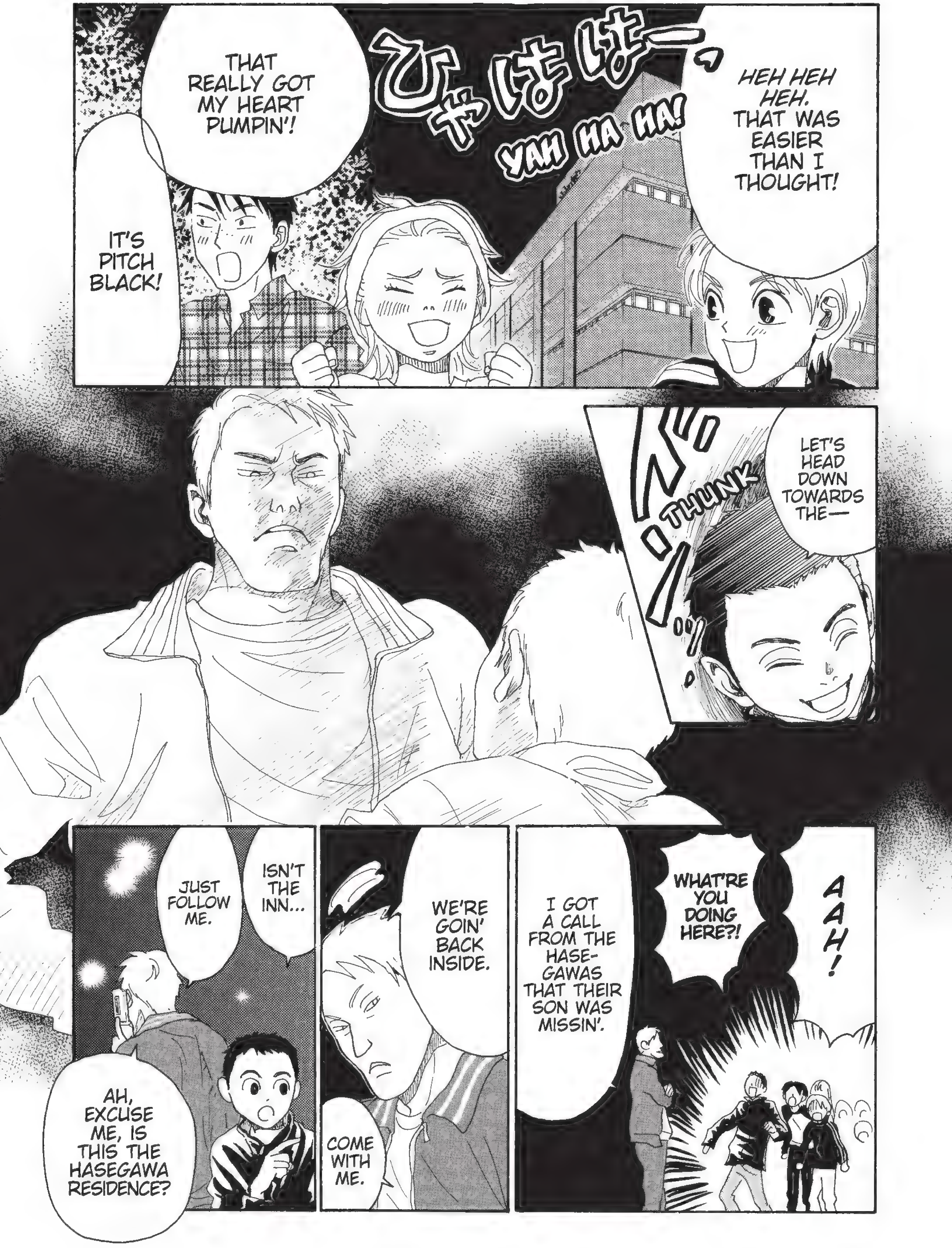
WHY DO YOU HAVE TO GO AND SAY IT, TOO?!
NO! I'M JUST— I'M JUST HAPPY MY PREDICTION CAME TRUE, OKAY?!
YOU BIG DUMMY!
WHAT'S WITH YOU?
I'M UNEASY.
BUT WHEN I THINK ABOUT KOU-CHAN...
...THE FEELING THAT I CAN DO ANYTHING RESOUNDS IN MY CHEST.

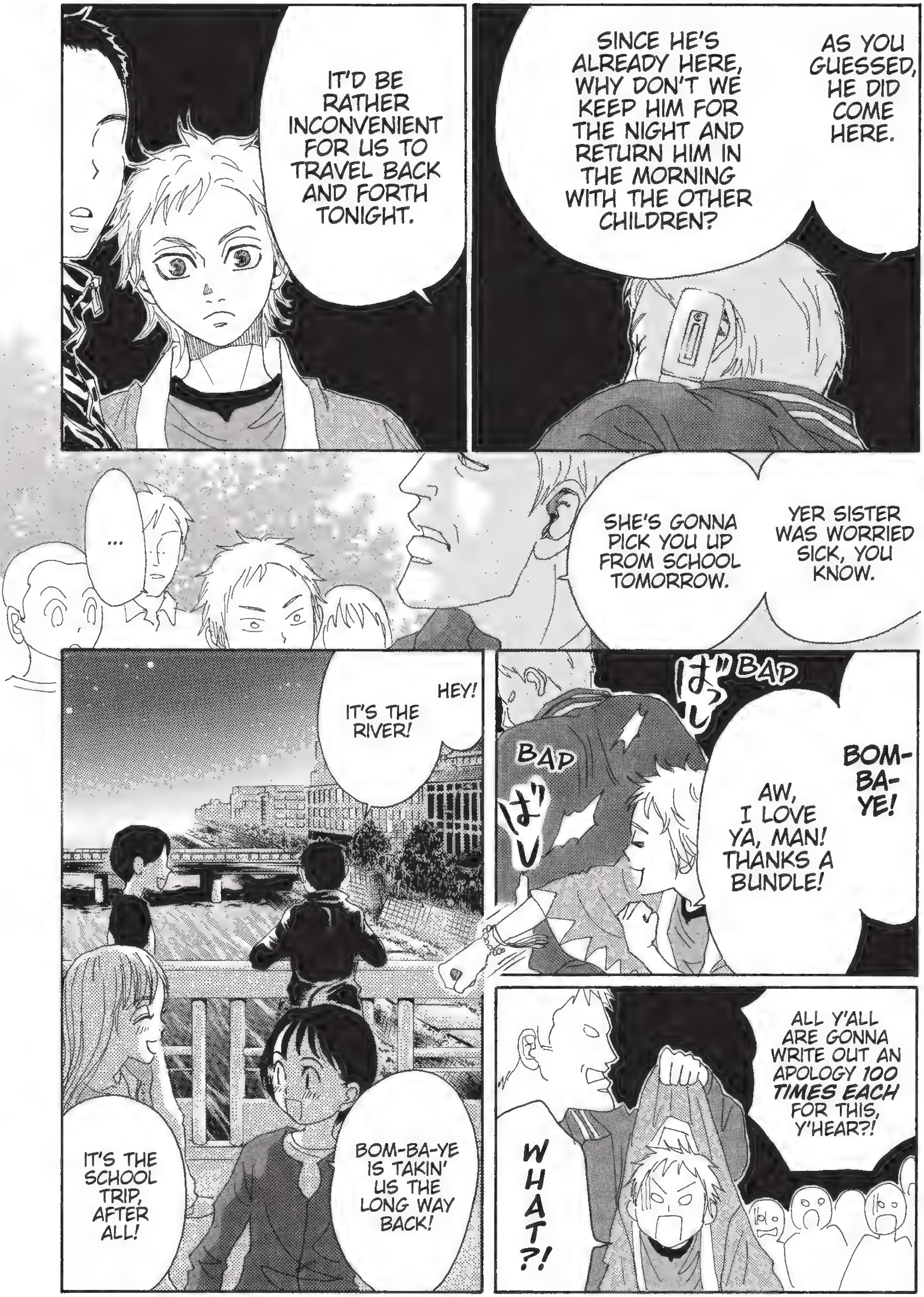
6

Before the Dawn

WHAT THE HELL'S THIS?
誠 TRUTH
IT'S A GIFT WE BOUGHT YA!
YOU'RE FREEZIN', AIN'TCHA? PUT IT ON!
SHH!
誠 TRUTH
NATSUME-CHAN? WERE YOU CRYING?
NO, NO! I WASN'T!
OH, NO!
THE TEACHER'S COME TO CHECK ON US!
LET'S SLIP OUT THE BACK WINDOW.
WHAT ABOUT SHOES?
LET'S JUST GO IN SLIPPERS.
WE GOTTA GO HOME TOMORROW, SO LET'S SHOW KOU THE SIGHTS OF KYOTO TONIGHT!
HE CAME ALL THE WAY HERE, AFTER ALL!
...
THANKS, Y'ALL!

IT WAS SUPPOSEDLY JUST FOR HIS SAKE...
...
ギィ
CREAK
I THINK WE ALL WANTED TO HAVE A FUN TIME WITH KOU-CHAN.
わっ
YEAH!


HEH HEH HEH. THAT WAS EASIER THAN I THOUGHT!
ひゃはは—っ
YAH HA HA!
THAT REALLY GOT MY HEART PUMPIN'!
IT'S PITCH BLACK!
LET'S HEAD DOWN TOWARDS THE—
THUNK
AAH!
WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE?!
I GOT A CALL FROM THE HASEGAWAS THAT THEIR SON WAS MISSIN'.
WE'RE GOIN' BACK INSIDE.
COME WITH ME.
ISN'T THE INN...
JUST FOLLOW ME.
AH, EXCUSE ME, IS THIS THE HASEGAWA RESIDENCE?


AS YOU GUESSED, HE DID COME HERE.
SINCE HE'S ALREADY HERE, WHY DON'T WE KEEP HIM FOR THE NIGHT AND RETURN HIM IN THE MORNING WITH THE OTHER CHILDREN?
IT'D BE RATHER INCONVENIENT FOR US TO TRAVEL BACK AND FORTH TONIGHT.
YER SISTER WAS WORRIED SICK, YOU KNOW.
SHE'S GONNA PICK YOU UP FROM SCHOOL TOMORROW.
...
BOM-BA-YE!
ばっ BAP
AW, I LOVE YA, MAN! THANKS A BUNDLE!
ばっ BAP
ALL Y'ALL ARE GONNA WRITE OUT AN APOLOGY *100 TIMES EACH* FOR THIS, Y'HEAR?!
WHAT?!
HEY!
IT'S THE RIVER!
BOM-BA-YE IS TAKIN' US THE LONG WAY BACK!
IT'S THE SCHOOL TRIP, AFTER ALL!

GRADUATION'S JUST HALF A YEAR AWAY NOW...

WHAT'S UP, NATSUME-CHAN?
C'MON AN' JOIN US!
AH!
BE RIGHT THERE!
THIS TRIP...
THE TIME SEEMED TO JUST FLY BY.
STILL...
I'D LIKE TO REMEMBER TODAY FOR A LONG TIME.

WHOA!
THEY REALLY DID COME GET HIM!
HIS MOM'S SO YOUNG!
THAT'S THE YOUNGEST OF HIS OLDER SISTERS.
HE AIN'T GOT A MAMA AT HOME.
OH...
I SEE...
YOU DIDN'T KNOW?
MAN, IT'S TOUGH BEING THE HEIR.
NOT EVEN A SCHOOL TRIP?
SURE, BUT ONCE YOU ACTUALLY INHERIT IT, YOU'RE BASICALLY THE KING, RIGHT?

AH HA HA... ISN'T "KING" EXAGGERATING A LITTLE?
NAH, IT'S PRETTY MUCH TRUE. THEY CONTROL THIS WHOLE AREA. EVERYONE HERE'S INDEBTED TO THEM FOR SOMETHIN' OR OTHER.
WHAT'S MORE, THEY SAY THE HASEGAWA FAMILY'S DESCENDED FROM THE GODS, TOO.
...IS THAT WHY THEIR RELATIVE IS A KANNUSHI?
I DON'T REALLY UNDERSTAND ALL THIS "GODS" STUFF THE LOCALS ARE TALKING ABOUT...
AT TIMES LIKE THESE...
...I REALLY DO FEEL LIKE AN OUTSIDER.
WE RESPECTFULLY DECLINE ANY NUDE WORK.
ALSO, WE RESERVE THE RIGHT FOR FINAL APPROVALS OF ANY MATERIAL TO BE PUBLISHED.
I EXPECT HER FATHER TO GIVE RETROACTIVE PERMISSION...
...ONCE THE PHOTOBOOK IS COMPLETE.
IN OTHER WORDS, I EXPECT YOU TO KEEP THIS PROJECT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

NO OBJECTIONS HERE!
THEN IT'S AGREED. THANK YOU.
THAT WAS FAST!
...
DO YOU REALLY NOT WANT ME TO STRIP?
BE MY GUEST!
NO, THANKS!
TOO BAD.
WHY ...
...DID YOU PICK ME?
HMM ...
WELL, THERE WERE CERTAINLY CUTER GIRLS...
TO TELL THE TRUTH, I HAD OTHER GIRLS SAY THEY WANTED TO POSE FOR ME, AND I EVEN WENT AS FAR AS TO BRING THEM TO MY SHOOTING LOCATIONS...

THOUGH, I GUESS I'D ALREADY DECIDED TO REJECT THEM BEFORE THEN.
BECAUSE... I FOUND THIS VERY INTERESTING GIRL.
SNAP
パシャ
SHE TRIED TO COVER IT UP WITH HER POSING...
...BUT THERE WAS STILL A SENSE OF MISMATCH.
LIKE, A "WHY AM I HERE?" KIND OF FEEL.
SOMEONE PREOCCUPIED WITH OTHER THINGS.
...

SNAP
HOW DO I PUT IT...
SOMEONE WHO BELIEVED IN HER OWN ABILITY BUT DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO PUT IT TO USE.
ON THE OTHER HAND, SHE HAD AN AMAZING PRESENCE ABOUT HER.
AND THAT'S WHY I'M STUCK HERE TAKING ALL THESE LANDSCAPES WITH YOU.
YOU SEE, NATSUME-CHAN... IT ALWAYS FEELS LIKE YOU'RE ...
...OUT OF PLACE.

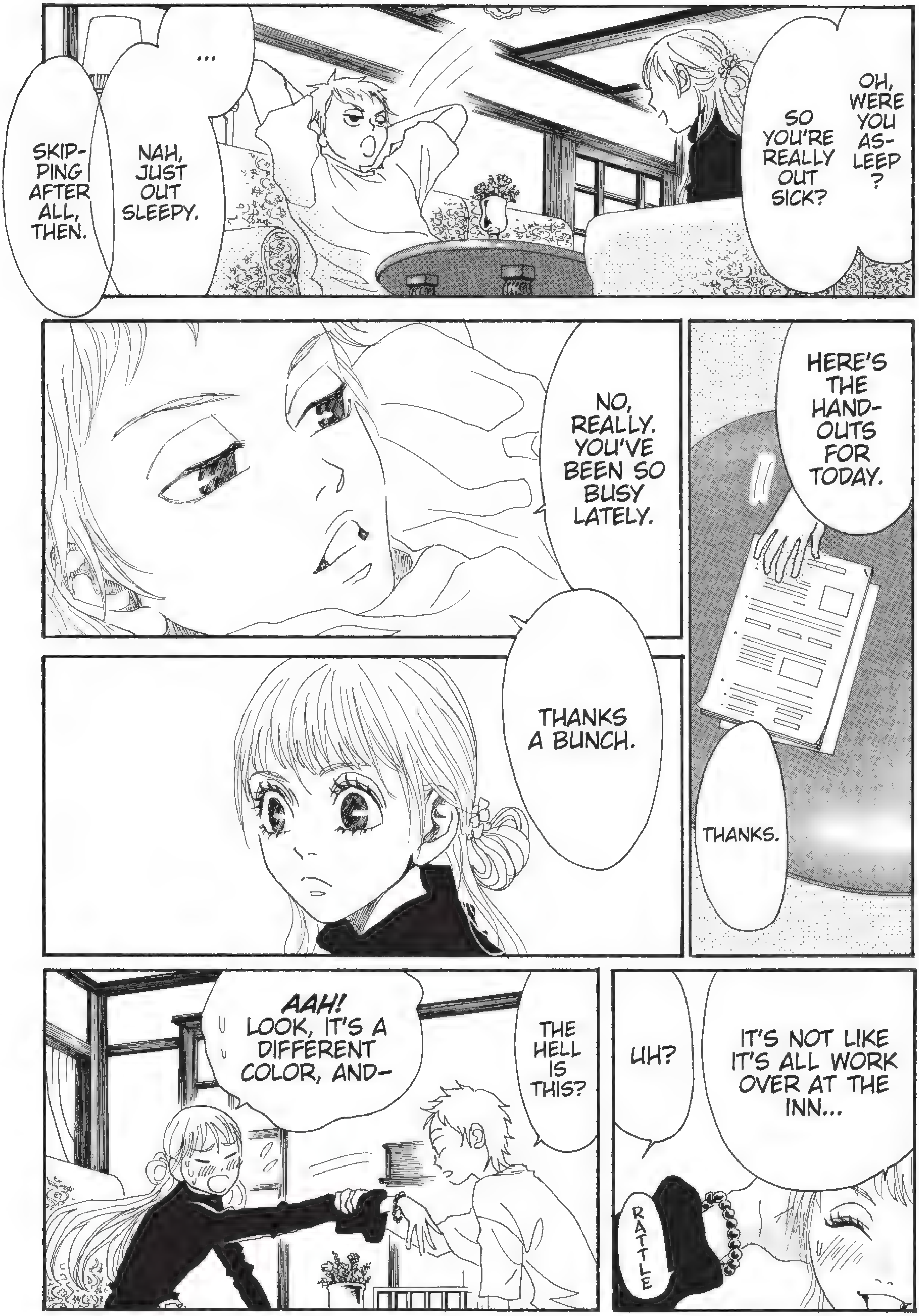
A GIRL WITH NO HOME ...
I WANTED TO SEE IF I COULD CAPTURE THAT IMBALANCE.
OF COURSE, I ALSO WANTED TO MAKE OUT OF YOU THE KIND OF YOUTHFUL PORTRAIT THAT MIDDLE-AGED MEN FANTASIZE ABOUT.
OH, NO...
...HE'S SEEN RIGHT THROUGH MY ACT.
I GUESS, IN SOME SENSE OF THE WORD, I REALLY DID LAY MYSELF BARE FOR HIM.

HIRONO-SAN... YOU REALLY ARE AMAZING.
ALL I DID WAS TAKE THE PICTURES! THE AMAZING ONE IS YOU, NATSUME-CHAN!
YOU'RE SOOOO CUTE!
OR MAYBE YOU ARE JUST A COMMON PEDOPHILE!
SHALL WE ADD SOME ACCESSORIES?
HMM...
OH!
THOSE PRAYER BEADS...
OH, YOU LIKE THEM?
HERE. THE BRACELET IS YOURS.
ちゃーら.
RATTLE
...
WELL, IT'S A DIFFERENT COLOR...
AND IT'S NOT UNUSUAL TO WEAR ONE...

I DOUBT ANYONE WILL THINK I'M JUST COPYING KOU-CHAN.
OOOH!
THAT'S A MATCH FOR KOU-CHAN'S, AIN'T IT?
IT'S A DIFFERENT COLOR! IT'S NOT UNUSUAL TO WEAR ONE!
WELL, KOU-CHAN'S IS,
Y'KNOW ...
OH, YEAH.
IT'S A REAL ONE, AIN'T IT.
HEY, WANNA COME OVER TONIGHT?
MAMA TOLD ME TO INVITE SOME FRIENDS OVER TO TRY A NEW CAKE FOR THE CAFÉ!
I'M SO THERE!
SORRY, I HAVE TO HELP OUT AT THE INN.
I HAVE TO GO NOW. SORRY! BYE!
AWW ...
NATSUME-CHAN SURE IS A GOOD KID, WORKIN' THROUGH WINTER BREAK LIKE SHE IS. I WISH SHE HAD TIME TO RELAX, THOUGH.
I'M GLAD WE NEVER HAVE TO HELP WITH OUR FAMILY BUSINESSES!
HA HA HA!
One new message...

This is Doi. Thanks for your hard work.
I know we said Hirono-san was supposed to be in today, but we're delaying until tomorrow. Sorry. See you then!
OH, MOCHIZUKI.
UGH! IF THAT'S THE CASE, I SHOULD HAVE GONE FOR CAKE!
HASEGAWA WAS ABSENT TODAY, RIGHT?
GO DELIVER THESE HANDOUTS.
Sorry to ask, you just live close to 'im.
...
THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE EVER VISITED KOU-CHAN AT HOME...
DING DONG

I WILL GO CALL FOR THE YOUNG MASTER PRESENTLY.
WOULD YOU CARE FOR SOME TEA?
IF—
IF IT'S NOT TOO MUCH TROUBLE ...
WOW ...
THEY WON'T EVEN LET KIDS IN TO SEE HIM?
HEY.
WHAT D'YA WANT?
SCRITCH ボリ
SCRATCH ボリ


OH, WERE YOU ASLEEP?
SO YOU'RE REALLY OUT SICK?
...
NAH, JUST OUT SLEEPY.
SKIPPING AFTER ALL, THEN.
HERE'S THE HANDOUTS FOR TODAY.
THANKS.
NO, REALLY. YOU'VE BEEN SO BUSY LATELY.
THANKS A BUNCH.
IT'S NOT LIKE IT'S ALL WORK OVER AT THE INN...
UH?
RATTLE
THE HELL IS THIS?
AAH! LOOK, IT'S A DIFFERENT COLOR, AND-

...WHAT ABOUT YOURS?
WHY DO YOU WEAR IT ALL THE TIME?
THIS?
...
IT'S A MEMENTO.
OR SOMETHIN' LIKE THAT.
"HE AIN'T GOT A MAMA AT HOME."

OH...
I SEE...
IT AIN'T MY MOM'S OR NOTHIN'.
IT'S FROM SOMEONE WHO WAS PROBABLY THE LAST GOD BORN INTO OUR FAMILY.
I WAS TOLD TO WEAR IT SO I WOULDN'T BE BAD.
I DON'T GET IT... AND YOU *ARE* BAD.
コンコン
KNOCK KNOCK
WILL YOU ALSO BE WANTING TEA, KOICHIRO-SAN?

OH, PARDON MY INTRUSION. YOU'RE KOU-CHAN'S SISTER?
I WANT GREEN TEA.
PUT THIS ON!
AH! YOU'RE STILL ONLY HALF-DRESSED, SILLY!
I'M FINE!
OH, HEY.
HERE'S MY HOMEWORK. DO IT FOR ME.
...UH.
She gasped in her thoughts, lol
...
ALL RIGHT. I SUPPOSE.
WHAT?!
THE GREEN TEA, TOO.
I KNOW, I KNOW!
バタン SLAM
HOW SPOILED ROTTEN CAN YOU BE?
IF MY LITTLE BROTHER DID HALF THOSE THINGS...
Ryuta...
HUH?
DIDN'T I TELL YOU?
I'M THE LONG-, LONG-AWAITED, VERY IMPORTANT FIRSTBORN SON.
LIKE, GET THIS.

MY SISTER YOU JUST MET? HER MOM ONLY HAD GIRLS, SO DAD THREW HER OUT.
AND THEN HIS SECOND WIFE, MY MOM, THEY SAID SHE'D DIE IF SHE HAD ME.
BUT 'CAUSE SHE WAS CARRYIN' A BOY...
...THEY MADE HER HAVE ME. AND SHE WENT AND DIED.
OR SO I HEARD.
THAT'S WHAT THIS FAMILY'S LIKE.
...
...

YOU DON'T GOTTA MAKE THAT FACE.
I'M LUCKY! I GOT TO BE BORN A KING!
THE WORLD IS FULL OF INEQUALITY, AND I'M ON TOP.
ははは HA HA HA
STILL... I THINK SHE MUST HAVE DECIDED TO HAVE YOU ON HER—
LOOK.
I DIDN'T ASK FOR YOUR OPINION.
I SHOULDN'T HAVE SAID ALL THAT IN THE FIRST PLACE.

...
EVEN IF IT WAS JUST A BIT...
...HE OPENED UP TO ME.
HEY.
DON'T YOU GOT WORK TO DO AT THE INN?
YOU MIGHT WANNA HEAD HOME.
...YEAH.
I WILL.

OH.
BY THE WAY, WHAT HAPPENED WITH THE NUDE SHOOT?
...
I DIDN'T DO IT.
... IZZAT SO.
HE SMILED?
WHAT WAS THAT FOR?
DOES THAT MEAN HE'S GLAD I DIDN'T POSE NUDE?
...
WELL, IT'S TRUE I DIDN'T DO NUDES.
AND WHEN THE PHOTO-BOOK'S DONE, I CAN STILL SURPRISE HIM.

KOU-CHAN...
I DON'T REALLY GET HIM.
...
AN IMBALANCED YOUNG KING...
BRIIING

AH!
HIRO-NO-SAN?
I wonder if it'll snow where you are tomorrow?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
IT'S STILL WARMER HERE THAN IN TOKYO.
I wish... I really wish I could take pictures of you in the snow, Natsume...
THAT'S UP TO THE GODS, ISN'T IT?
OH!
I GUESS I COULD ALWAYS ASK, LIKE THE LOCALS DO.
CLAP
ぱんっ
CLAP
ぱんっ
WOW...

THIS IS MORE ACCUMULATION THAN THEY'VE HAD IN 12 YEARS, I HEARD!
ABOUT THAT...
I ACTUALLY PRAYED FOR SNOW AT THE SHRINE WE'RE SHOOTING NEAR.
I'M SO GRATEFUL, NATSUME!
MY LITTLE LOVER!
SO ADORABLE!
THANK THE GODS, NOT ME!
WHY THIS SHRINE IN PARTICULAR? JUST A COINCIDENCE?
I didn't tell you where we'd be shooting ...
...
JUST A COINCIDENCE.
ぱんっ CLAP
ぱんっ CLAP
...
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT.
THINGS ARE GOING AMAZINGLY WELL.
DID YOU KNOW? THE GOD OF THIS MOUNTAIN IS SAID TO BE A TERRIBLE HAG.

A HAG?
SNAP
AN ABSOLUTELY HIDEOUS WOMAN.
SHE WAS BORN A GOOD GODDESS, BUT WAS INTENSELY JEALOUS.
SO THEY SAY THAT, WHENEVER A WOMAN WOULD COME TO THIS MOUNTAIN, NATURAL DISASTERS WOULD FOLLOW.
ONE DAY, A YOUNG MAN CAME AND THOUGHT THE HAG GODDESS LOOKED BEAUTIFUL UNDER THE MOON'S SILVERY LIGHT...
...SO HE BUILT THIS SHRINE AT THE PLACE WHERE THAT LIGHT SHONE.
AND, STRANGELY ENOUGH, THE GODDESS HAS BEEN CALM EVER SINCE.

THAT SUPPOSED YOUNG MAN'S DESCENDANTS STILL PROTECT THIS LAND.
IT'S A FAMILY BY THE NAME OF HASEGAWA, AND—
OH!
THE BOY WHO ATTACKED YOU THAT ONE TIME IS A HASEGAWA.
OH!
REALLY?
WELL...
JUDGING FROM HIM, I'D SAY IT'S ALL TRUE.
...HIRONO-SAN.
YES?
DO YOU REALLY THINK HE'S THAT SPECIAL?
YOU SEE...
I DECIDED TO DO THIS PHOTOBOOK WITH YOU...
...SO I COULD SHOW HIM UP.
SNAP

... I SEE.
I...
I WONDER IF I CAN BEAT HIM.
...YOU ABSOLUTELY CAN!
DID YOU KNOW?

BEFORE ...
HE CALLED YOU "HIS."
SPLAT

OH...
ビシャッ
SPLOT

HEY!
KOU-CHAN!
IT'S NOT WHAT YOU THINK!
I'M NOT DOING NUDES!
SO WHAT?

KOU-CHAN...
HE'S JUST LAUGHING AT MY GUILTY CONSCIENCE.

HUFF HUFF
HUFF HUFF
...
ドサッ
FLUMP

SNAP
SNAP
SNAP
...HIRONO-SAN.
HM?
I...
...WANT TO BEAT HIM.

SNAP
YOU'RE WINNING RIGHT NOW!
CRUNCH
HEH.
I WISH THAT WERE TRUE.
I WISH.
AAH...
THE SNOW...
ITS COLD PIERCES RIGHT THROUGH ME.

7

Yearning

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! IT'S STILL SNOWING!
IT'S ALREADY MARCH!
KOU! THIS'S GOTTA BE PUNISHMENT FOR WHEN YOU WENT AN' CRASHED THE FESTIVAL!
Wait, I did, too!
HA HA HA
COULD BE 'CAUSE WE GOT SOMEONE DOIN' STRANGE THINGS 'ROUND THESE PARTS.

THE ANGER FOR THOSE STRANGE THINGS CAME NOT FROM THE GODS,
BUT FROM KOU-CHAN.
THE CHERRY TREES ARE SUPPOSED TO BE BLOOMING ALREADY IN THIS REGION.
THAT'S TOO BAD.
I REALLY WANTED THE FINAL SHOTS TO BE OF CHERRY BLOSSOMS.
ビシャッ
SPLOT
立入禁止
NO ENTRY
ザク
CRUNCH
WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?!

SPLAT
ベチャッ
WHAT IS IT?
YOU DON'T WANT IT TO END?
SNAP
パシャ
NO.
I LIKE BEING PHOTOGRAPHED.
I WANT TO SHOW KOU-CHAN THESE PICTURES SOON.
KOU-CHAN IS THERE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE LENS.

I WANT TO MAKE HIM...
...
SNAP
パシャッ。
...EVEN ANGRIER.

第58回
浮雲町立浮
卒業式
*58TH ANNUAL UKIGUMO PRIMARY SCHOOL GRADUATION CEREMONY
あおーーげばーー
とおーーとーー
しーー
WITH DEEP RESPECT...
JUST WHEN THE CHERRY TREES FINALLY BLOSSOMED...
WHAT'RE Y'ALL CRYIN' FOR?! WE'RE GOIN' TO THE SAME MIDDLE SCHOOL, AIN'T WE?
AIN'T NOTHIN' GONNA CHANGE BUT OUR UNIFORMS!
...MY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DAYS AND THE PHOTOSHOOT BOTH CAME TO AN END.

WHOOSH
ジャッ
ジャッ
WHOOSH
ジャッ
WHOOSH
ジャッ
WHOOSH
HEY! NATSUME-CHAN!

HUFF
HUFF
MORN-IN'!
HUFF
GOOD MORNING, KANA-CHAN!
IT'S GETTIN' HUMID OUT!
I KNOW!
I HOPE WE GET SUMMER UNIFORMS SOON. I'M SICK OF LONG SLEEVES!
HA HA HA!
WE'VE ONLY GOT A MONTH LEFT.
OUTTA THE WAY!

AH!
ZOOM
I-A

KOU-CHAN...
HE AIN'T WEARIN' HIS HELMET. IF THE UPPERCLASSMEN SEE HIM, THEY'LL SURE BE MAD.
ALL THAT JUST TO STAND OUT...
...
HE'LL GET WHAT HE DESERVES, THEN.
DRIP DROP
ポツ
ギャーッ
ROAR
RAIN AGAIN?!
GET OUT YER RAINCOAT!

I THOUGHT THE SNOW'D NEVER STOP, AND NOW HERE WE ARE WITH UNENDIN' RAIN!
AAH... I HOPE WE CHANGE INTO SUMMER UNIFORMS SOON!
NOW WE'RE JUS' TALKIN' IN CIRCLES!
AH HA HA HA
THE PHOTOBOOK COMES OUT AROUND WHEN WE CHANGE UNIFORMS.
AS LONG AS I GET MY PHOTOBOOK, I DON'T CARE HOW MANY STORMS WE HAVE.
Y'ALL SHOULDA TAKEN THE BUS IF IT WAS RAININ'!
IT STARTED HALFWAY THROUGH, THOUGH!
GOOD MORNING!
1-B

OH!
GOOD MORNING.
NATSUME-CHAN! LET'S GET TO THE CLASSROOM.
...OR WERE WE SUPPOSED TO GO TO THE SCIENCE ROOM NEXT?
...
LATER, KANA-CHAN.
...
YEAH, LATER.
KANA-CHAN ALWAYS COMES TO OUR CLASS DURING BREAKS...
I GUESS SHE DOESN'T HAVE ANY FRIENDS IN HER OWN CLASS.
I HOPE SHE'S OKAY...
KOU-CHAN IS IN THE SAME CLASS AS HER, THOUGH...
YO, OTOMO.
FORGET SOMETHING?
MY PROTRACTOR.
AND MY TEXTBOOKS.

HEY...
Y'ALL WENT TO THE SAME ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AS HIM, RIGHT?
THAT SPOILED BRAT IS THE HASEGAWA FAMILY'S ONLY SON.
NICE! THERE SURE WEREN'T NO BOYS LIKE THAT AT OUR SCHOOL.
科I SCIENCE
THERE AREN'T BOYS LIKE THAT ANYWHERE.
I SEE... DOES HE HAVE A GIRLFRIEND?
HUH?
O'COURSE NOT! HE'S FRESH OUTTA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL!
OUR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HAD COUPLES A-PLENTY.
I HEARD Y'ALL'S SCHOOL WAS PRETTY ADVANCED, BUT I GUESS IT'S TRUE!
Wow.
IT SEEMS LIKE ALL THE KIDS AT YOUR SCHOOL WERE PRETTY MATURE, HUH, SAKI-CHAN?
理
WHADDAYA MEAN?
AIN'T IT LIKE THAT ALL OVER TOKYO?
NO WAY! BOYS AND GIRLS DON'T GET ALONG AT ALL!

EVERY DAY IS ANOTHER BATTLE!
THE BOYS ARE SO DENSE, YOU WISH THEY'D JUST DIE! Seriously!
HA HA HA HA
OH? REALLY?
HEY! IT'S MOCHIZUKI-SAN!
MAN... THEM CITY GALS SURE FEEL DIFFERENT FROM THE REST!
HEY... Y'ALL WENT TO THE SAME SCHOOL AS HER, RIGHT? WERE YA CLOSE?
WE WERE FOR HALF A YEAR, BUT I DON'T REALLY RECOMMEND IT.
YOU WERE GONNA ASK ME TO INTRODUCE YOU, RIGHT?
YA KNOW...
Y'ALL ACT PRETTY STRANGE IN MY BOOK.
HOW'S THAT?

キーンコーン
DING DONG
WELL, THAT GIRL, SHE'S BEEN NOTICED BY A LOT OF FOLK, ESPECIALLY UPPERCLASSMEN...
YEAH? I GUESS SHE WOULD.
カーンコーン
DANG DONG
AN' SHE EVEN...
YOU GOIN' STEADY WITH ANYBODY?
I'M SINGLE RIGHT NOW, BUT...
I CAN'T. SORRY.
I'M NOT SURE I'M READY FOR A RELATIONSHIP YET.
...
MIDDLE SCHOOL IS INTENSE!
I GOT ASKED OUT!
By someone I don't even know!
WHY'D YOU TURN HIM DOWN?!

You dummies!
I TOLD YOU NOT TO FOLLOW ME!
DON'T YOU GET IT? HE WAS THE STAR PLAYER ON THE SOCCER TEAM!
WHAT A WASTE!
THE SOCCER TEAM'S STAR PLAYER, HUH...
WELL, THAT SOUNDS IMPRESSIVE,
BUT I'M GOING TO BE THE STAR OF THE BASKETBALL TEAM!
SOMEDAY!
ONE, TWO!
ONE, TWO!
Still practicing ball handling, though...
AND BESIDES...
CG silicon
Call Doi Manager
vodafone
Natsume-chan?!
About the audition for that commercial...
OH!
I PASSED, RIGHT?
Wh—?

YES!
I KNEW IT!
You knew it?
Um?
We're talking about the RH one, right?
The one where they dug up all those famous actresses?
カラ
SLIDE
SURE, THEY DID...
ザー
SHHHHH
IT'S JUST...
I WAS CERTAIN I'D MAKE IT.
DON'T YOU REMEMBER MY AUDITION?
MAYBE IT WAS BASELESS CONFIDENCE...
...
Natsume-chan.
You gave me goosebumps just now.
I really think...
...you'll turn out to be someone amazing.
ザー
SHHHH
IT SEEMS LIKE...
...NO MATTER HOW AMAZING I BECOME...

MY HANDS...
...STILL CAN'T REACH HIM.
NO SWAPS
SEAT CHANGE
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9 10 11 12 13 14
19 20 21 22 23
30
EVERYONE, PLEASE PROMPTLY TAKE YOUR NEW SEATS.
カタッ RATTLE
heh heh heh
YES! WINDOW SEAT!

...
YO.
...
YO.
WE'RE NEIGHBORS AGAIN!
Like in elementary school.
STARE
YEP.
...
STARE
... WHAT?
DID YOU GET TALLER?
SOMETHING FEELS... DIFFERENT.
I MIGHT'VE, I GUESS?
MAYBE IT'S JUST THE UNIFORM.
NO...
IT'S NOT JUST THAT.

WE'RE BECOMING REAL MIDDLE SCHOOLERS.
I THOUGHT PIGTAILS LOOKED CHILDISH!
EACH OF US...
...IN OUR ILL-FITTING UNIFORMS...
...WERE CHANGING.
WHAT?!
HAYASE ?!
SHOOSH
!!
—!
...

WHY?
WE'VE TALKED BEFORE. WHY CAN'T I TALK TO HIM NOW?
KOU-CHAN...
...IN MANY WAYS...
...HE'S CHANGING A LOT, TOO.
Ahem!
Could the following students please report to the office immediately:
From Year 1, Class A: Koichiro Hasegawa.
1-B
どっ
SLAM
WHAT'D HE DO THIS TIME?
HA HA HA
Mitsuo Iwashita. Keiji Terada.
Akina Shinjo. Suzuka Kunihiro.

STAFF OFFICE
I HEARD THEY WAS AT THE ARCADE IN THEIR UNIFORMS AN' SOMEONE RATTED 'EM OUT.
LOSERS.
GO HOME!
WHAT'S WITH THOSE GIRLS?
THEY HAVE SUCH SMUG EXPRESSIONS. HOW DUMB.
GIRLS' LOCKER ROOM
YOU MEAN THE ONE NEXT TO HASEGAWA-KUN?
YEAH, WE WENT TO THE SAME SCHOOL. SHE WAS ALWAYS CHASIN' BOYS.
SHE WAS JUST A LI'L BIT SEXY, AND THE BOYS JUST ATE IT UP.
YA DON'T SAY!

I BET SHE'S AFTER HASEGAWA-KUN.
WHAT?!
HOW LOW CAN YOU GO?!
THAT LITTLE *IDIOT* DOESN'T KNOW HER *PLACE! I'VE HAD ENOUGH!*
...WHOA. WHAT WAS THAT?
I'VE NEVER SEEN NATSUME LIKE THAT BEFORE.
I GUESS NATSUME-CHAN LIKES KOU-CHAN, AFTER ALL...
I CAN'T BELIEVE A PLAIN-LOOKING GIRL LIKE THAT...!
AND JUST BECAUSE SHE'S IN THE SAME CLASS AS HIM!
HINEMOSU INN

TEN MORE DAYS UNTIL THE PHOTO-BOOK'S OUT...
6月
THEN I'LL SHOW HIM HOW AMAZING I CAN BE!
YOU CAN'T JUST CHANGE ON YOUR OWN LIKE THAT!
STOP CHANGING, DUMMY!
ピンポーン
DING DONG
SPECIAL DELIVERY FOR NATSUME MOCHIZUKI-SAN!

BAM!
Summer Footprints
SHOGO HIRONO CHASES AFTER THE BEAT OF A YOUNG GIRL'S HEART
AAH!
FLUMP
MY COMP COPIES ARE ALREADY HERE!
AND A WHOLE LOT OF THEM!
大量にっ
...
...

Summer footprints
SUM
パラ FLIP
パラッ FLIP
パラ FLIP
パラッ FLIP
パラ FLIP

THIS...
...WON'T DO IT.
THE IDIOT WHO DOESN'T KNOW HER PLACE...
...IS ME.
WHAT SHOULD I DO?
I DOUBT THE COMMERCIAL WILL WORK OUT, EITHER.
I THINK...
AT THIS RATE...

I'LL BE LEFT OUT OF THE WORLD KOU-CHAN IS BUILDING FOR HIMSELF.
IN THAT CASE...
I'M FREE AFTER CLUB'S OVER.
I CAN'T...
MY VISION ...
...IS BLACKING OUT...

MY PHOTO-BOOK CAME OUT!
JANGLE
ガシャ
OH, NO...

WHAT?
...
HUH?
ZOOM ザッ
WHOOSH シャッ
WHOOSH シャッ

WHOOSH
ギュンッ
JANGLE
ガシャッ!
THUD
ドボッ

...
...YOU'RE THE WORST.

AH...
IT'S TRUE.
HE IS DIFFERENT.
SHOW ME.
...NO.
NEVER.
...
YOUR BAG, RIGHT?
AH!
YOU HAVE IT WITH YOU, DON'T YOU?
ARGH! DON'T GET IT WET, AT LEAST!

パラ
FLIP
...
FLIP
パラ
I...

I WANTED TO BE ALL LIKE...
"SEE? I'M HOT STUFF, RIGHT?"
SUMME
I WANTED TO RUB IT IN YOUR FACE.
BUT THEN...
HIRONO-SAN...
...WAS JUST TOO GOOD.
IT'S LIKE THESE PICTURES AREN'T EVEN OF ME.

SOME-HOW...
...THANKS TO HIS SKILL...
...JUST BY TAKING PICTURES, HE COULD DO THIS.
NO, IT'S YOU ALL RIGHT.

YOU'RE ALWAYS LOOKIN' LIKE THIS WHEN YOU LOOK AT ME.
KOU-CHAN...
YOUR VOICE CRACKED.
SHUT IT.
OKAY.
I...

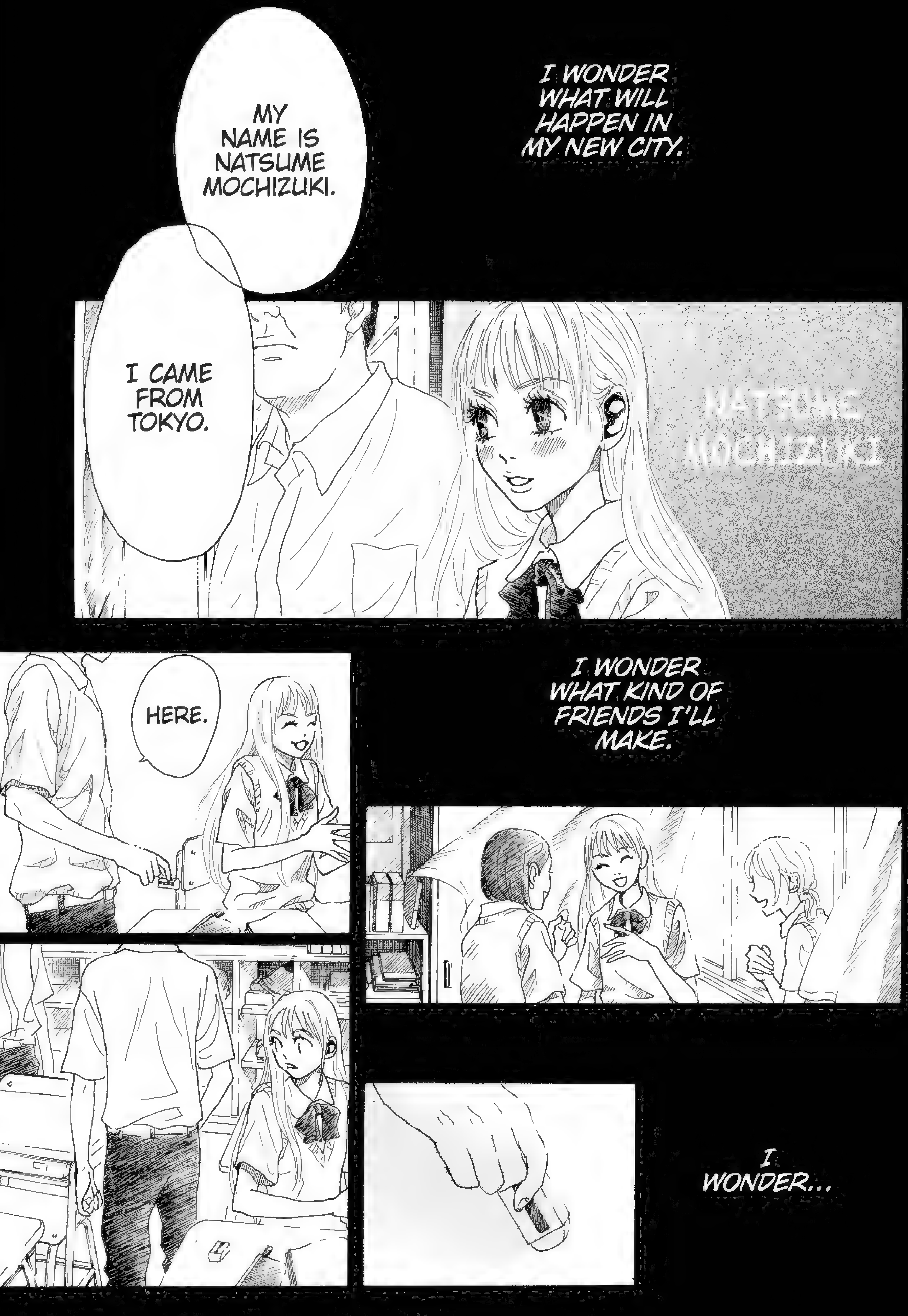
I WANTED TO BE BY YOUR SIDE AND TO WATCH OVER YOU.
I...
I WANTED TO BEAT YOU, TO MAKE YOU MAD AT ME.
AND, BY DOING THAT,
GET CLOSER TO YOU.
IT DOESN'T ...
MAKE A LOT OF SENSE.
I DON'T EVEN KNOW...
...WHY I'M CRYING RIGHT NOW.
SOB
... OKAY.
WANNA GO OUT?
I...

WHAT ?!
I ASKED IF YOU WANNA GO OUT.
...
THAT'S THAT, THEN.
HSHHHH

YES, OF COURSE.
HEH.

WHY SO FORMAL?
HA HA HA.
MY WORLD CHANGED THAT DAY.

Drowning Love


I WONDER WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN MY NEW CITY.
MY NAME IS NATSUME MOCHIZUKI.
I CAME FROM TOKYO.
NATSUME MOCHIZUKI
I WONDER WHAT KIND OF FRIENDS I'LL MAKE.
HERE.
I WONDER...

...IF LOVE...
...COULD BLOSSOM THERE, TOO.
…ぶーっ
SPLURT
MITSUYA REHOUSING.
IT'S NATSUME!
WELCOME HOME.
DEAR ...
AGAPE
...THIS PHOTOBOOK OF HERS ALSO GOES ON SALE TODAY.

8

This Shining World

NATSUME——!
SHE'S ALREADY LEFT FOR SCHOOL.
TWEEDLE-LEE-DEE
TWEET
TWEEDLE-LEE-DEE
TWEET

TWEEDLE-LEE-DEE TWEET
HEY, CUT IT OUT!
NOW THAT'S THE FACE OF A YOUNG MAIDEN IN LOVE! CARE TO SHARE WHAT HAPPENED?
HUH?
HUH?
YOU'RE GETTING US ALL EXCITED, TOO!
...
TWEEDLE-LEE-DEE
YOUR WHISTLING SUCKS.
TWEE—

HEY!
DID YOU SEE MY COMMERCIAL?
AAH...
IT FEELS LIKE THE WORLD IS SO FULL OF WONDER, LIKE I COULD DO ANYTHING AT ALL!
YEAH, I SAW IT.
I WAS SO SURPRISED I SPAT OUT MY TEA! WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY NOTHIN'?!
CLAMOR
IT'S JUST— I WAS— IT'S EMBARRASSING!
MURMUR
MURMUR
A PHOTOBOOK, TOO?!
DID YOU DO NUDES?
WOW...
SHOW-OFF.
MAYBE I SHOULD ASK FOR YOUR AUTOGRAPH!

KOU-CHAN!
LET'S GO HOME TOGETHER TODAY!
The Summer Footprints girl!
The Re-housing girl!
I'VE GOT CLUB.
ME, TOO!
SO LET'S WAIT FOR EACH OTHER AND—
IF MY CLUB LETS OUT FIRST, I AIN'T WAITIN'.
YOU'D BETTER! WE'RE DATING, AREN'T WE?!
AH?!
YOU CAN'T MEAN...!
SCREECH
YEAH!
I KNEW YOU HAD A THING FOR KOU-CHAN!
...YEAH! I DO!
THAT'S RIGHT!

THAT'S WHAT IT'S BEEN THIS WHOLE TIME!
AND— WAIT. DOESN'T THAT MEAN KOU-CHAN HAS A THING FOR ME?
WHOA ...
HEH HEH HEH
HEY, NATSUME-CHAN ....
一撃必殺
ONE STRIKE ONE KILL
... I SEE...
HE...
THIS IS KIND OF...
UNREAL ...
The Rehousing girl!
HUH?
HASEGAWA? HE LEFT WITH THE OTHERS.
...
TWEEDLE-LEE-DEE TWEET
WOW! AMAZING!
TWEEDLE LEE-TWEET DEE

TWEEDLE-LEE-DEE
EVER SINCE HE ASKED ME OUT...
TWEET
MY HEART...
...HAS BEEN THROBBING.
SNAP
SNAP
HUH?
IT'S NATSUME-CHAN!
IN THE FLESH!
SNAP
SNAP
UCHIGUMO HOT SPRINGS
SNAP
HUH?
WHAT?
YOU WORMS! GET OUT! YOU'RE BAD FOR BUSINESS!
AAH!
HINEMOSU INN
SEEMS LIKE THEY FOUND OUT WHO YOU ARE AND WHERE YOU LIVE ON THE INTERNET.
IT SEEMS ONE OF THE WORKERS HERE WANTED TO BRAG AND LEAKED THE INFO.
MAKES ME SICK!
...

THAT'S WHY I WAS **AGAINST** ALL OF THIS IN—
NATSUME.
HOW ABOUT YOUR FATHER AND I HAVE A **SEPARATION,**
AND YOU LIVE WITH ME IN TOKYO?
WHAT?!
WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE SAYING?!
THAT'S RIGHT!
DIDN'T I SAY I WAS GOING TO QUIT MODELING?!
YOU DID, BUT ...
WHEN YOU WERE SHOOTING THE COMMERCIAL AND THE PHOTOBOOK...
...YOU JUST SEEMED SO HAPPY.
WELL...
THAT'S BECAUSE....
YESTERDAY A GROUP OF CRAZY FANS AMBUSHED ME!
SCARY, RIGHT?
IF ONLY I HAD A **BOYFRIEND** TO ESCORT ME HOME!
ZOOM
IDIOT.
YOU REAP WHAT YOU SOW.

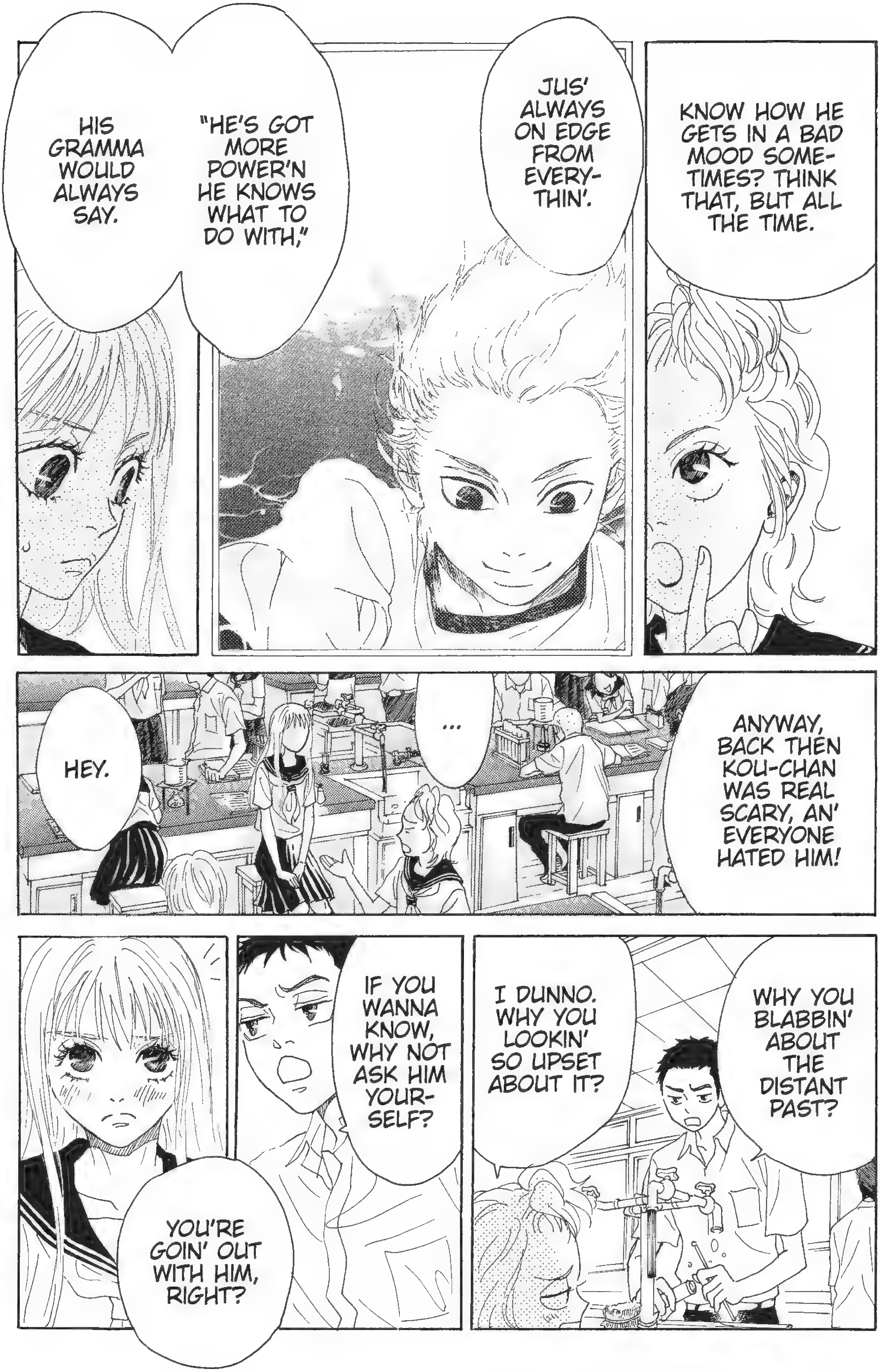
...I GUESS I WAS RIGHT.
BOTH THE PHOTO-BOOK AND THE COMMERCIAL...
KOU-CHAN DOESN'T APPROVE OF THEM.
LET ME SAY ONE THING.
HM?
JANGLE
I WANT TO LIVE MY LIFE HERE TO THE FULLEST.
AND THAT MEANS...
...NO MORE WORKING. JUST SCHOOL.
"NO MORE"? THAT'S IT?
SO WALK ME HOME.
ACT LIKE WE'RE DATING FOR ONCE.
LET ME HAVE MY NORMAL LIFE!
...

Hey.
WE CAME TO SCHOOL TOGETHER, DIDN'T WE?
THAT'S SOMETHIN'.
ONLY BECAUSE I FOLLOWED YOU!
OH.
LOOKS LIKE THE PROBLEM CHILDREN HAVE ARRIVED.
...HM.
UNIFORM INSPECTION
TIE UP YOUR HAIR!
YOUR SKIRT SHOULD BE KNEE-LENGTH!
OW!
WHAP
I'M EVEN WEARING IT LONGER THAN USUAL!
I'M CONFISCATING YOUR BRACELET!
What ?!
WA HA HA HA!
YOU CAN HAVE IT BACK AFTER GRADUATION!
YOURS, TOO!
RATTLE

LOOK HERE.
THIS IS A MEMENTO HONORING MY GRANNY.
I'M SURE YOU WELL KNOW...
...WHY I HAVE IT.
YANK

SO I CAN'T LAY A FINGER ON IT?
FINE.
IN RETURN...
YOU'D BETTER BE ON YOUR BEST BEHAVIOR.
JUST WAIT AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU GET IN TROUBLE!
HASEGAWA-SAN IS AN EXCEPTION!
NO HAIR COLORING!
...
WH—
WHAT WAS THAT?
DID HE JUST—
HE DID PUNISH KOU-CHAN! HE SAID HE WAS AN EXCEPTION IN FRONT OF EVERYONE!

HE MADE A SHOW LIKE HE WAS GIVING IN, ONLY TO RUB HIS "FAVOR" INTO EVERYONE'S FACES!
HMPH.
AN EXCEPTION, HUH?
KOU-CHAN'S PRAYER BEADS?
理科室
SCIENCE ROOM
WELL... WHEN HE WAS SMALL, HE WAS PRETTY WILD.
SOUNDS LIKE KOU-CHAN, YEAH.
LET'S GO CRAZY!
HERCULES
I'M GUESSIN' IT'S A LOT WORSE THAN WHATEVER YOU'RE IMAGININ'.
HE ALMOST KILLED A CLASSMATE AN' GOT 'IMSELF EXPELLED FROM KINDERGARTEN!
...HOW THE...


KNOW HOW HE GETS IN A BAD MOOD SOMETIMES? THINK THAT, BUT ALL THE TIME.
JUS' ALWAYS ON EDGE FROM EVERYTHIN'.
"HE'S GOT MORE POWER'N HE KNOWS WHAT TO DO WITH,"
HIS GRAMMA WOULD ALWAYS SAY.
ANYWAY, BACK THEN KOU-CHAN WAS REAL SCARY, AN' EVERYONE HATED HIM!
...
HEY.
WHY YOU BLABBIN' ABOUT THE DISTANT PAST?
I DUNNO. WHY YOU LOOKIN' SO UPSET ABOUT IT?
IF YOU WANNA KNOW, WHY NOT ASK HIM YOURSELF?
YOU'RE GOIN' OUT WITH HIM, RIGHT?

WELL ... I GUESS THAT'S TRUE.
SO, GET THIS.
KOU-CHAN'S GRAMMA PUTS THOSE PRAYER BEADS ON HIM, AND SUDDENLY HE DOESN'T GO WILD ANYMORE!
OH, AND ALSO, KOU-CHAN'S GRAMMA HAD THESE SUPERNATURAL POWERS, RIGHT?
...
...SUPERNATURAL?
LIKE, SHE COULD SEE AND HEAR STUFF NOBODY ELSE COULD.
WHAT?
UH?
CHINGADINGADINGADINGADINGADINGA
WHAT THE-?!
AAH!
BING BONG BANG BING
THE FIRE ALARM HAS BEEN TRIGGERED.
PLEASE EXIT THE BUILDING IN AN ORDERLY FASHION.

MURMUR
MURMUR
SKEEE
AHEM …
AT THIS POINT, WE ARE STILL INVESTIGATING THE CAUSE OF—
'SCUSE ME!
WE PULLED THE FIRE ALARM!
AH?!
YOUR CLASS WAS PUTTING PEOPLE TO SLEEP,
SO WE HAD A CONFERENCE AND DECIDED TO WAKE THEM UP BY RINGING THE ALARM!
STOMP
YOU LITTLE–!
HOW DARE YOU INCONVENIENCE THE OTHER STUDENTS!
CHATTER
CHITTER

VERY SORRY FOR THE *INCONVENIENCE*, EVERYONE!
IN EXCHANGE...
FLING
...WHY NOT HAVE SOME OF THIS FUN STUFF?
WOW!
IT'S ALL THE STUFF THAT GOT CONFISCATED!
HEY! DON'T YOU DARE PICK THAT UP!
HA HA HA
PITTER
PATTER

THAT CLASS IS OUT OF CONTROL.
THERE WAS ALSO THE TIME THEY ALL MADE PAPER AIRPLANES IN CLASS, AND WE HAD TO HAVE AN ASSEMBLY ABOUT IT.
THEY JUST WANT TO STAND OUT.
WOW... GEEZ...
IT DOES SEEM LIKE KOU-CHAN'S CLASS HAS A LOT OF FUN, THOUGH...
I'M A LITTLE JEALOUS.
OH,
SUZUKA!
YOU WERE CALLED TO THE OFFICE WITH THEM A FEW DAYS AGO!
...
AH...
THAT SURE WAS FUN.
YEAH, SEE, I HAD THIS RING I REALLY LIKED, AN' IT GOT TAKEN, RIGHT?
SO I TOLD KOU AND THEM, AND...
...HE WAS LIKE, YEAH, THAT TEACHER PISSES ME OFF, TOO!
SUZUKA KUNIHIRO IS JUST DOING THOSE THINGS TO TRY TO GET CLOSE TO KOU-CHAN.

HUH ... I GUESS SO.
WOW, I ENVY YOU, THOUGH.
YOU GET TO BE IN HIS CLASS AND HAVE FUN.
NOTHING DOING!
AN' ANYWAY, AIN'T YOU AND HIM DATING NOW?
MAYBE, BUT HE WON'T EVEN ESCORT ME HOME OR ANYTHING!
STILL!
I THINK YOU'RE THE ONLY PERSON WHO CAN KEEP UP WITH HIM.
AND HE'S THE ONLY ONE WHO SUITS YOU, TOO.
KANA-CHAN! THAT'S TOO MUCH!
THAT'S WHAT I THINK.
IT MAKES ME A LITTLE...
JEALOUS.
...

I THINK...
...KANA-CHAN MIGHT STILL HAVE FEELINGS FOR HIM, TOO.
HASEGAWA? HE WENT HOME ALREADY.
KENDO CLUB
...
WHAT'S EVEN THE POINT OF GOING OUT, THEN?
カチャ CHACK
カチャ CLICK
カチャ CHACO
OH!
KOU-CHAN! WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH MY—
WHAM
ARGH!
YOU STUCK YOUR GUM IN MY BELL!
NOW YOU CAN'T RING IT!
WA HA HA HA!
CH— CHING—

IT'S 'CAUSE YOU TOOK TOO LONG.
YOU WAITED FOR ME!
LIKE A REAL BOYFRIEND!
YUP.
WELL, ALL'S I WANTED WAS TO SEE THE LOOKS ON YOUR FANS' FACES.
OH, HOORAY, MY KNIGHT IN SHINING ARMOR!
ZOOM
ON SECOND THOUGHT, SOUNDS LIKE A HASSLE.
GO HOME BY YOURSELF.
HEY! NO, COME BACK!
SINCE WE'RE TOGETHER, WHY DON'T WE GO SOMEWHERE?
ZOOM
LIKE,
I DUNNO, WE COULD CHECK OUT THE MARINA.
SO? HOW ABOUT IT?

FWOOSH
LOOK AT ALL THIS WATER!
IF YOU WANNA SEE WATER, THERE'S A BEACH BY YOUR HOUSE, YOU KNOW.
SURE, BUT THERE'S NO MARINA!
LOOK!

IT'S ALWAYS PITCH BLACK AT MY PLACE AT NIGHT,
BUT HERE, IT'S ALL LIT UP!
EHEH!
IT REMINDS ME OF THE CITY! ♡
LOOK AT THAT HOTEL UP ON THE MOUNTAIN...
HIRONO-SAN STAYED THERE AND TOLD ME IT WAS SUPER LUXURIOUS!
YEP.
MY FAMILY OWNS IT.
SO WE'RE RIVALS?!
ALL WE'VE DONE IS THIS FAKE MODERN RESORT TOWN STUFF.
YOUR INN IS AN OLD-FASHIONED FAMILY BUSINESS. IT'S GREAT.

YOU CALL IT OLD-FASHIONED, BUT IT'S JUST RUN-DOWN...
HUP.
AH—
WAIT—
OKAY, I KNOW I WANTED TO GET ON THE BOAT, TOO, BUT...
RELAX.
MY FAMILY OWNS IT.
仁 義 丸
...I SEE.
"HASEGAWA-SAN IS AN EXCEPTION."
HEY!
LOOKIT THAT ONE THAT'S ALL LIT UP. THAT'S A SQUID FISHIN' BOAT.

WOW... IT'S SO BRIGHT!
THEY SAY THE FISHIN' FIRE'S SO BRIGHT YOU CAN SEE IT FROM MILITARY SATELLITES...
OH.
RATTLE
I FORGOT ABOUT THIS.
HERE.
OH!
WOW!
NO WAY!
THANK YOU!
RATTLE
"IT'S FROM SOMEONE..."
"...WHO WAS PROBABLY THE LAST GOD BORN INTO OUR FAMILY."

"I WAS TOLD TO WEAR IT SO I WOULDN'T BE BAD."
YOUR PRAYER BEADS...
YOU SAID THEY'RE A MEMENTO FROM YOUR GRANDMOTHER.
YUP.
HERE. TAKE 'EM.
RATTLE
WHAT?!
UH?
BUT... IF YOU TAKE THEM OFF, THE SUPERNATURAL POWER WILL—
IT'S JUST A PLACEBO EFFECT.
PLACEBO? BUT—
AH!
IF THEY REALLY DO HAVE SOME KINNA "SUPERNATURAL POWER" OR WHATEVER...

...THEN I'D RATHER THEM BE PROTECTING YOU.
I GOT A BAD FEELIN' ABOUT SOMETHIN'.
YOU NEED TO BE CAREFUL.
A BAD FEELING?
...
TO TELL THE TRUTH, I JUS' DON'T NEED THEM ANYMORE.
THEY'RE YOURS.
...

OKAY ...
YOU'VE BEEN WEARING THEM FOR SO LONG, THOUGH...
I DON'T REALLY UNDERSTAND ...
MAYBE HE WAS WORRIED ABOUT ME.
I'M REALLY GOING TO KEEP THEM, YOU KNOW!
FINE.
HERE. TAKE THIS IN EXCHANGE.
RATTLE
LET MY FEELINGS PROTECT YOU INSTEAD!

SLIP
WHADDAYA KNOW...
EVEN YOUR NAILS ARE ALL PRETTY AND CARED FOR.
I'M IMPRESSED.
YOU SAY THAT...

...BUT YOU'RE SO PRETTY YOURSELF...

MM!

I DID IT.
...YEAH.
I STOPPED SHORT THAT TIME A YEAR BACK.
HE HE HE...
YEAH, YOU DID.

THAT GOES FOR YOU, TOO.
YA DUMMY. I ALREADY STOLE YOURS BACK. MINE GETS TAKEN, AN' IT'S YER TURN.
DON'T GET IT CONFISCATED, NOW.
BRIIING
BRIIING
Call Doi Manager
...
IG-NORED.
YOU OKAY WITH THAT?
BRIIING
HE'S JUST GOING TO GIVE ME MORE WORK.
BRIIING

...
YA KNOW... IF YOU WERE GONNA QUIT THAT EASY,
WHY'D YOU DO IT IN THE FIRST PLACE?
...
TO COMPETE WITH YOU.

...
WHAT?
IT'S NOT LIKE I REGRET IT OR ANYTHING. I HAD FUN.
AND IT GAVE ME THE CONFIDENCE TO BE NEAR YOU.
...
SURE, I GUESS.
AFTER ALL...
I ALREADY HAVE EVERYTHING I WANT.
ひねもす屋
HINEMOSU INN
ひねもす屋
SEE YOU LATER!
AND THANKS FOR SEEING ME HOME!
ひねもす屋
...

DASH
SLIDE
WHAP
TIP TAP
TIP TAP
KOU-CHAN...
OH, KOU-CHAN!
AS LONG AS I HAVE KOU-CHAN, THINGS WILL BE ALL RIGHT.
AAH...
THE WORLD IS SO FULL OF WONDER, AND I CAN DO ANYTHING AT ALL.

112分
0:51:23
REC
STARE
HAH...
HAH...
AAH... NATSUME...
STARE
HAH...
HAH...
HAH...
THAT'S IT... GIVE IT EVERYTHING...
HAH...

CONTINUED IN *DROWNING LOVE* VOLUME THREE

Drowning Love

Drowning Love 2

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